

the neighborhood of 42 percent of all poultry produced in the United States and the exports from my State of Georgia alone are about \$300 million a year.

It is a tremendous issue economically and one that impacts not only poultry but it has a spillover effect because as poultry prices continue to decline and supplies continue to build up domestically, it begins to affect the beef industry, the pork industry, the turkey industry, and, likewise, the grain producers who supply the feed that goes into feeding the poultry flocks. So it does have a very detrimental effect overall unless Russia is willing to make some changes and to live up to their trade agreements.

They have done that before. I believe it was in 1998 that Russia first imposed an embargo on American poultry. And as a result of that, it had tremendous economic impacts on the poultry industry in the United States. And the industry, even though it is heavily located in my State and in other southern States, it is an industry that employs people in 38 of our States. And half of the poultry exports of the United States are actually going to Russia. So when we see this import ban being placed by Russia, we know that it has long-term consequences.

Now, we also know that Russia wants some things from the international community. From the United States they want the repeal of the Jackson-Vanick statute. They also want admission into the World Trade Organization. All of these are issues that I think we are all willing to consider. But we expect them to do so as they approach international trade with a fair and even hand, and that is what we are asking.

LIFTING THE RUSSIAN POULTRY EMBARGO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the gentleman has said and what he brings before the House here tonight about the embargo and how the Russians are holding up the shipment of poultry products from Georgia.

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We all in Georgia have poultry plants within our districts, and I do have a letter I would like to submit to the RECORD, a letter that the delegation has sent to the President asking him to involve with the President of Russia on his visit later this week to talk about this very important issue because not only will it have an effect on the poultry business, but it will have an effect on trade between our two countries and could be negative, but it could also be turned into a positive position.

At this point, I will insert the letters into the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 17, 2002.

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
The White House, Pennsylvania Ave.,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: We, the members of the Georgia Congressional delegation, appreciate your Administration's active engagement to restore U.S. poultry exports to Russia to normal, pre-embargo trade levels. Since there remain a number of hurdles in achieving this goal, we are writing to request your continued personal involvement so that this issue can be resolved as timely as possible.

With poultry contributing one-fourth of total U.S. exports to Russia, the severe trade disruption has exacerbated the trade imbalance Russia has with the United States. The disruption of poultry exports to Russia has caused U.S. chicken companies to experience a cost of over \$25 million per week in terms of lost sales opportunities overseas and depressed domestic prices for chicken. Further, the price impact has rippled to competing meats, such as pork and beef, because the chicken leg quarters originally destined for Russia are now competing with other meats in U.S. supermarkets. Corn and soybean farmers are beginning to feel the economic impact too, as chicken companies start to adjust their production plans in the wake of the depressed Russian market for U.S. poultry.

Georgia is the Nation's leading poultry state so the economic damage is being felt more severely than in many other states. Also, with much of Georgia's exports being shipped to Russia, the problem is compounded.

Of particular concern is Russia's demand that a new U.S./Russian veterinary agreement be negotiated and agreed-upon by June 29, 2002. Such a demand will be very difficult to meet for a number of reasons. On April 30, 2002, Russia proposed a new, revised veterinary agreement to replace the 1996 agreement. This version contains many unworkable provisions, such as prohibition against the feeding of genetically modified grains and oilseeds, banning of many FDA-approved antibiotics, and other so-called sanitary requirements that do not improve food safety but are, in fact, potential non-tariff trade barriers for U.S. poultry.

We are very concerned that Russia has not accepted the idea that international trade is a two-way path. Russia has a more than two to one favorable trade balance with the United States.

Sincerely,
Jack Kingston, Johnny Isakson, John Linder, Charlie Norwood, Cynthia McKinney, John Lewis, Saxby Chambliss, Mac Collins, Bob Barr, Nathan Deal, Sanford Bishop, Members of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 13, 2002.

Hon. ROBERT B. ZOELLICK,
U.S. Trade Representative, Department of State,
Washington, DC.

DEAR AMBASSADOR ZOELLICK: I am writing today to express my concerns about the continuing ban by Russia on U.S. poultry and poultry products. The Russian government, despite an announcement that it was ending its embargo on April 15, 2002, is continuing to prevent U.S. poultry and poultry products from entering the country. According to some estimates, no U.S. poultry products have been imported into Russia since the announcement was made that the ban was being lifted. Also, at least 20,000 metric tons of U.S. poultry products, shipped before the embargo was announced on March 10, are

still at Russian ports waiting to be unloaded. This ongoing ban on U.S. poultry is costing producers in this country at least \$25 million dollars per week.

Sending \$308 million in poultry and poultry products abroad in 2000, Georgia is the leading exporter of poultry and poultry products in the United States. On behalf of the growers and 18,000 employees who process chicken in Georgia, I request that you contact the Russian government and urge them to quickly end this de facto embargo of U.S. poultry.

I appreciate your on going efforts to ensure fair trade practices and international market access for U.S. products.

Sincerely,

MAC COLLINS,
Member of Congress.

GEORGIA POULTRY FEDERATION,
Gainesville, GA, May 15, 2002.

Hon. MAC COLLINS,
Member of Congress, Longworth House Office
Bldg., Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN: On Monday, Congressman Jack Kingston volunteered to coordinate a Georgia delegation letter to the President and other key officials about the Russian situation and we were very appreciative of this.

Russia continues to ban U.S. exports of poultry through various unreasonable trade demands. This unfair situation is having a tremendous impact on the poultry industry in Georgia and if not reversed will have a serious impact on all agriculture in our State and Nation.

As mentioned before, even with full poultry exports, Russia ships produces valued at \$6.5 billion to the U.S. while receiving goods valued at only \$2.7 million from the U.S. This 2.4 times ratio is not good for the U.S. balance of payments or for poultry and agriculture. It is a very dangerous trend.

We hope that you will join with Congressman Kingston and others and sign this very important letter.

Sincerely yours,

ABIT MASSEY.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the time this evening during this special order to discuss the need for a Medicare prescription drug benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I have been to the floor many times in the last few weeks, within the last few months, concentrating on the need for a Medicare prescription drug benefit, and the reason I say that is because I get more and more calls every day, every week, every month from my constituents, my senior constituents, complaining about the cost of prescription drugs, the inadequacy of Medicare or whatever kind of health insurance they have to cover prescription drugs, because Medicare generally does not provide for a prescription drug benefit, and most seniors do not have it through any kind of other supplemental health insurance that they might have.

The need for an affordable, adequate prescription drug coverage, in my opinion, continues to grow, and I am very